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Environment and sustainable development: international strategy for disaster reduction

Report of the Second Committee*

Rapporteur: Ms. Jana **Simonová** (Czech Republic)

I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 98 (see A/56/561, para. 2). Action on sub-item (b) was taken at the 22nd, 25th, 36th and 39th meetings, on 5 and 6 November and 4 and 11 December 2001. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/56/SR.22, 25, 36 and 39).

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolutions A/C.2/56/L.12 and A/C.2/56/L.46

2. At the 22nd meeting, on 5 November, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77, China and Mexico, introduced a draft resolution entitled "International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon" (A/C.2/56/L.12), which read:

> "*The General Assembly,*
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> "*Recalling* its resolutions 52/200 of 18 December 1997, 53/185 of 15 December 1998, 54/220 of 22 December 1999 and 55/197 of 20 December 2000 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/46 of 28 July 1999, 1999/63 of 30 July 1999 and 2000/33 of 28 July 2000,

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"*Noting* that the signing of the memorandum of cooperation between the Republic of Ecuador and the World Meteorological Organization constitutes a major step in the process for the establishment of the international centre for the study of the El Niño phenomenon,

"*Reaffirming* the importance of developing strategies at the national, subregional, regional and international levels that aim to prevent, mitigate and repair the damage caused by natural disasters that result from the El Niño phenomenon,

"1. *Takes note* with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General;

"2. *Commends* the measures adopted by the host country for the establishment of the international centre for the study of the El Niño phenomenon;

"3. *Calls* upon the Secretary-General and the relevant United Nations organs, funds and programmes, in particular those taking part in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and the international community to adopt, as appropriate, the necessary measures to support the establishment of the above-mentioned research centre at Guayaquil, Ecuador, and invites the international community to provide scientific, technical and financial assistance and cooperation for that purpose;

"4. *Welcomes* the establishment of the working group on climate and disasters and invites the Inter-agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to ensure functional synergies among the working groups dealing with climate variability, economic and social vulnerability and effectiveness of early warning systems;

"5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue the full implementation of its resolutions 52/200, 53/185, 54/220 and 55/197 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/46, 1999/63 and 2000/33;

"6. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session on the implementation of the present resolution, under the item entitled 'Environment and sustainable development'."

3. At the 36th meeting, on 4 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Dharmansjah Djumala (Indonesia), introduced a draft resolution entitled "International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon" (A/C.2/56/L.46), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.12.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.46 (see para. 10, draft resolution I).

5. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.46, draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.12 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

B. Draft resolutions A/C.2/56/L.15 and A/C.2/56/L.62

6. At the 25th meeting, on 6 November, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77, China and Mexico, introduced a draft resolution entitled "International Strategy for Disaster Reduction" (A/C.2/56/L.15). Subsequently, Canada and the United States of America joined in sponsoring the draft resolution, which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Recalling* its resolutions 44/236 of 22 December 1989, 49/22 A of 2 December 1994, 49/22 B of 20 December 1994, 53/185 of 15 December 1998 and 54/219 of 22 December 1999, as well as Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/63 of 30 July 1999 and 2001/35 of 26 July 2001,

"*Also recalling* the forward-looking platform for international concerted disaster reduction as developed by the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and as expressed in the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action, as well as the Geneva mandate on disaster reduction and the strategy document entitled 'A safer world in the twenty-first century: risk and disaster reduction',

"*Emphasizing* the multisectoral, interdisciplinary and cross-cutting nature of natural disaster reduction, and stressing that continued interaction, cooperation and partnerships among the institutions concerned are considered essential to achieve jointly agreed objectives and priorities,

"*Having considered* the current institutional arrangement, as established by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/219 of 22 December 1999, with the Inter-agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and taking into account the assessment after the first period of operations,

"*Recognizing* that disaster reduction is an important element contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and that it should be taken into account in the preparatory process of the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg in 2002,

"*Reiterating* that natural disasters damage the social and economic infrastructure of all countries, although the long-term consequences of natural disasters are especially severe for developing countries and hamper their sustainable development,

"*Welcoming* the emphasis placed on natural disaster reduction in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held at Brussels from 14 to 20 May 2001,

"*Recognizing* that disaster reduction should be regarded as an important function of the United Nations and should receive continued attention,

"*Stressing* the need for the international community to demonstrate the firm political determination required to utilize scientific and technical

knowledge to reduce the vulnerability to natural disasters and environmental hazards, taking into account the particular needs of developing countries,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General concerning the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

"2. *Expresses* deep concern at the increasing number and scale of natural disasters, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for vulnerable societies throughout the world, in particular in developing countries;

"3. *Reaffirms* that the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction should perform the functions indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, in particular those of serving as a main forum in the United Nations system for devising strategies and policies for disaster reduction and ensuring complementarity of action by agencies involved in disaster reduction, mitigation and preparedness, and decides to review the activities of the Task Force in 2003;

"4. *Decides* that the Task Force should be modified in order to provide for the increased participation, on a permanent basis, of regional intergovernmental organizations and to ensure the continued membership of the key United Nations agencies;

"5. *Recognizes* that the framework of action for the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, as endorsed by the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, constitutes the basic guide for the implementation of the Strategy, and that the framework shall be periodically reviewed according to the evolving needs in the field of natural disaster reduction and, in this context, urges all relevant bodies within the United Nations system to cooperate fully within the context of the framework;

"6. *Further stresses* that the inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy should be strengthened to effectively perform its functions, in particular to serve as the focal point in the United Nations system for the coordination of disaster reduction and to ensure synergies among the disaster-reduction activities of the United Nations system and regional organizations and activities in socio-economic and humanitarian fields;

"7. *Calls* upon Governments to continue to cooperate and coordinate their efforts with the United Nations system, other international organizations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and other partners, as appropriate, in order to ensure effective synergies in the field of natural disasters, and urges the secretariat for the Strategy to develop such synergies, as appropriate;

"8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to allocate adequate financial and administrative resources for the effective functioning of the Task Force and the secretariat, under the direct authority of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat;

"9. *Calls* upon Governments to establish national platforms or focal points for disaster reduction, urges the United Nations system to provide appropriate support for these mechanisms, and invites the Secretary-General to strengthen the regional outreach of the secretariat for the Strategy in order to

ensure appropriate support by the United Nations system for these mechanisms;

"10. *Invites* Governments and relevant organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen national participation, in particular of disaster-prone countries, in the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, including through national multisectoral and interdisciplinary platforms, in order to achieve sustainable development goals and objectives, with the full utilization of scientific and technical knowledge, including through capacity-building at all levels and the development and strengthening of global and regional approaches that take into account regional, subregional, national and local circumstances and needs, as well as the need to strengthen coordination of national emergency response agencies;

"11. *Calls* upon Governments to continue to cooperate and coordinate their efforts in the field of natural disasters within the framework of the Strategy, based upon an effective division of labour, from prevention to early warning, response, mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction, including through capacity-building at all levels, and the development and strengthening of global and regional approaches that take into account regional, subregional, national and local circumstances and needs, as well as the need to strengthen coordination of national emergency response agencies in natural disasters;

"12. *Recognizes* the urgent need to further develop and make use of the existing scientific and technical knowledge to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters, and emphasizes the need for developing countries to have access to technology so as to effectively tackle natural disasters;

"13. *Urges* the international community to increase financial contributions to the Trust Fund for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and to provide adequate scientific, technical, human and other resources to ensure adequate support for the secretariat for the Strategy, the Task Force and its working groups;

"14. *Requests* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to support achievement of the goals of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, including by seconding technical staff to the secretariat for the Strategy;

"15. *Endorses* the proposal of the Secretary-General to review the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action, within the context of the framework for action for the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

"16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to optimize further and disseminate through all available channels, including handbooks and information systems, the information necessary for the effective management of international cooperation in the fields of disaster prevention, early warning, response, mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction;

"17. *Reiterates* the need to continue international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon, within the framework of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, as requested by the Economic

and Social Council in its resolutions 1999/46 of 28 July 1999, 2000/33 of 28 July 2000 and by the General Assembly resolutions 52/200 of 18 December 1997, 53/185, 54/220 of 22 December 1999 and 55/197 of 20 December 2000;

"18. *Recognizes* the importance of early warning as an essential element in the culture of prevention, and encourages renewed efforts at all levels to contribute to natural hazard monitoring and impact prediction, the development and transfer of technology, capacity-building for disaster preparedness, the detection of natural hazards and the issuance and communication of early warning, as well as education and professional training, public information and awareness-raising activities, and stresses the need for appropriate action in response to early warning;

"19. *Reaffirms* the need to strengthen the international framework for the improvement of early warning systems and disaster preparedness by developing an effective international mechanism for early warning, including the transfer of technology related to early warning to developing countries which ensures that vulnerable people receive appropriate and timely information, and by expanding and improving existing systems, in particular those under the auspices of the United Nations, as an integral part of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

"20. *Decides* to maintain the annual observance of the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction on the second Wednesday of October as a vehicle to promote a global culture of natural disaster reduction, including prevention, mitigation and preparedness;

"21. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, under the agenda item entitled 'Environment and sustainable development', a report on the implementation of the present resolution and on the progress made in the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction."

7. At the 39th meeting, on 11 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Dharmansjah Djumala (Indonesia), introduced a draft resolution entitled "International Strategy for Disaster Reduction" (A/C.2/56/L.62), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.15.

8. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.62 (see para. 10, draft resolution II).

9. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.62, draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.15 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendations of the Second Committee

10. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I
International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 52/200 of 18 December 1997, 53/185 of 15 December 1998, 54/220 of 22 December 1999 and 55/197 of 20 December 2000 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/46 of 28 July 1999, 1999/63 of 30 July 1999 and 2000/33 of 28 July 2000,

Noting that the signing of the memorandum of cooperation between Ecuador and the World Meteorological Organization[1] constitutes a major step in the process for the establishment of the international centre for the study of the El Niño phenomenon,

Also noting the contributions made by regional and global climate-study organizations and specialized Internet information services, which have led to improved scientific understanding and prediction capabilities in the area of climate variability,

Reaffirming the importance of developing strategies at the national, subregional, regional and international levels that aim to prevent, mitigate and repair the damage caused by natural disasters that result from the El Niño phenomenon,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General;[2]

2. *Commends* the measures adopted by the host country for the establishment of the international centre for the study of the El Niño phenomenon, and encourages the Government of Ecuador to continue its efforts aimed at the completion of this process;

3. *Encourages* the centre, once established, to strengthen its links with other relevant regional and global climate-study organizations, as well as with Internet information services, in order to ensure an effective and efficient use of the available resources;

4. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General and the relevant United Nations organs, funds and programmes, in particular those taking part in the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and encourages the international community, to adopt, as appropriate, the necessary measures to support the establishment of the above-mentioned research centre at Guayaquil, Ecuador, and invites the international community to provide scientific, technical and financial assistance and cooperation for this purpose, as well as to strengthen, as appropriate, other centres devoted to the study of the El Niño phenomenon;

5. *Welcomes* the establishment of the working group on climate and disasters, and invites the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to ensure functional synergies among the working groups dealing with climate variability, social and economic vulnerability, and the effectiveness of early warning systems;

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[1] A/C.2/56/2, appendix.

[2] A/56/76-E/2001/54.

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue the full implementation of its resolutions 52/200, 53/185, 54/220 and 55/197 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/46, 1999/63 and 2000/33;

7. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session on the implementation of the present resolution, under the item entitled "Environment and sustainable development".

Draft resolution II
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/236 of 22 December 1989, 49/22 A of 2 December 1994, 49/22 B of 20 December 1994, 53/185 of 15 December 1998 and 54/219 of 22 December 1999 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/63 of 30 July 1999 and 2001/35 of 26 July 2001,

Also recalling the forward-looking platform for international concerted disaster reduction, as developed by the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and as expressed in the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action,[3] as well as the Geneva mandate on disaster reduction and the strategy document entitled "A safer world in the twenty-first century: risk and disaster reduction",[4]

Emphasizing the multisectoral, interdisciplinary and cross-cutting nature of natural disaster reduction, and stressing that continued interaction, cooperation and partnerships among the institutions concerned are considered essential to achieve jointly agreed objectives and priorities,

Having considered the current institutional arrangement, as established in its resolution 54/219 of 22 December 1999, with the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and taking into account the assessment after the first period of operations,

Recognizing that disaster reduction is an important element that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development and that it should be taken into account in the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2 to 11 September 2002,

Reiterating that natural disasters damage the social and economic infrastructure of all countries, although the long-term consequences of natural disasters are especially severe for developing countries and hamper their sustainable development,

Welcoming the emphasis placed on natural disaster reduction in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, adopted by

[3] A/CONF.172/9, resolution 1, annex I.

[4] Adopted by the programme forum on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, held at Geneva from 5 to 9 July 1999.

the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held at Brussels from 14 to 20 May 2001,[5]

Recognizing that disaster reduction should be regarded as an important function of the United Nations and should receive continued attention,

Stressing the need for the international community to demonstrate the firm political determination required to utilize scientific and technical knowledge to reduce the vulnerability to natural disasters and environmental hazards, taking into account the particular needs of developing countries,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General concerning the Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;[6]

2. *Expresses deep concern* at the increasing number and scale of natural disasters, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for vulnerable societies throughout the world, in particular in developing countries;

3. *Reaffirms* that the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction should perform the functions as indicated in the report of the Secretary General,[6] in particular those of serving as a main forum within the United Nations system for devising strategies and policies for disaster reduction and ensuring complementarity of action by agencies involved in disaster reduction, mitigation and preparedness, and decides to review the activities of the Task Force in 2003 and that the inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy should also develop collaborative links with appropriate regional disaster reduction organizations;

4. *Decides* that the Task Force should be modified in order to provide for the increased participation and continued membership of regional intergovernmental organizations and key United Nations agencies;

5. *Recognizes* that the framework of action for the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, as endorsed by the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, constitutes the basic guide for the implementation of the Strategy, and that the framework shall be periodically reviewed, according to the evolving needs in the field of natural disaster reduction, and urges all relevant bodies within the United Nations system to cooperate fully within the context of the framework;

6. *Stresses* that the inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy should be consolidated and enhanced to effectively perform its functions, in particular to serve as the focal point in the United Nations system for the coordination of disaster reduction and to ensure synergies among the disaster-reduction activities of the United Nations system and regional organizations and activities in socio-economic and humanitarian fields;

7. *Calls upon* Governments to continue to cooperate and coordinate their efforts with the United Nations system, other international organizations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and other partners, as appropriate, in order to ensure effective synergies in the field of natural disasters, and urges the secretariat for the Strategy to develop such synergies, as appropriate;

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[5] A/CONF.191/11.

[6] A/56/68-E/2001/63.

8. *Invites* therefore all Governments and relevant international organizations to give appropriate consideration to the issue of natural disaster reduction in their preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2 to 11 September 2002;

9. *Underlines* the importance of adequate financial and administrative resources for the effective functioning of the Task Force and the secretariat, under the direct authority of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs;

10. *Calls upon* Governments to establish national platforms or focal points for disaster reduction, urges the United Nations system to provide appropriate support for those mechanisms, and invites the Secretary-General to strengthen the regional outreach of the secretariat for the Strategy in order to ensure such support;

11. *Invites* Governments and relevant organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen national participation, in particular of disaster-prone countries, in the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, including through national multisectoral and interdisciplinary platforms, in order to achieve sustainable development goals and objectives, with the full utilization of scientific and technical knowledge, including through capacity-building at all levels and the development and strengthening of global and regional approaches that take into account regional, subregional, national and local circumstances and needs, as well as the need to strengthen the coordination of national emergency response agencies;

12. *Calls upon* Governments to continue to cooperate and coordinate their efforts in the field of natural disasters within the framework of the Strategy, in line with their respective skills and capacities, from prevention to early warning, response, mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction, including through capacity-building at all levels, and the development and strengthening of global and regional approaches that take into account regional, subregional, national and local circumstances and needs, as well as the need to strengthen the coordination of national emergency response agencies in natural disasters;

13. *Recognizes* the urgent need to further develop and make use of the existing scientific and technical knowledge to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters, and emphasizes the need for developing countries to have access to technology so as to effectively tackle natural disasters;

14. *Calls upon* Governments and United Nations agencies to collaborate more closely in the sharing of disaster response and mitigation information, to take full advantage of United Nations emergency information services such as ReliefWeb, as well as the Internet, and to consider other methods for the sharing of information;

15. *Calls upon* the secretariat for the Strategy and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to facilitate the development of better linkages with all relevant actors, including the private sector and financial institutions, in the development of disaster management strategies;

16. *Encourages* the international community to provide the necessary financial resources to the Trust Fund for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and to provide adequate scientific, technical, human and other resources to ensure adequate support for the secretariat, the Task Force and its working groups;

17. *Requests* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to support the achievement of the goals of the Strategy, including by seconding technical staff to the secretariat for the Strategy;

18. *Endorses* the proposal of the Secretary-General to review the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action,[3] within the context of the framework for action for the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to optimize further and disseminate through all available channels, including handbooks and information systems, the information necessary for the effective management of international cooperation in the fields of disaster prevention, early warning, response, mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction;

20. *Reiterates* the need to continue international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon, within the framework of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, as requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolutions 1999/46 of 28 July 1999, 2000/33 of 28 July 2000 and by the General Assembly in its resolutions 52/200 of 18 December 1997, 53/185 of 15 December 1998, 54/220 of 22 December 1999 and 55/197 of 20 December 2000;

21. *Recognizes* the importance of early warning as an essential element in the culture of prevention, and encourages renewed efforts at all levels to contribute to natural hazard monitoring and impact prediction, the development and transfer of technology, capacity-building for disaster preparedness, the detection of natural hazards and the issuance and communication of early warning, as well as education and professional training, public information and awareness-raising activities, and stresses the need for appropriate action in response to early warning;

22. *Reaffirms* the need to strengthen the international framework for the improvement of early warning systems and disaster preparedness by developing an effective international mechanism for early warning, including the transfer to developing countries of technology related to early warning, which ensures that vulnerable people receive appropriate and timely information, and by expanding and improving existing systems, in particular those under the auspices of the United Nations, as an integral part of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

23. *Decides* to maintain the annual observance of the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction on the second Wednesday of October, as a vehicle to promote a global culture of natural disaster reduction, including prevention, mitigation and preparedness;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, under the agenda item entitled "Environment and sustainable development", a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including criteria and modalities for the selection of the non-permanent members of the Task Force, and on the progress made in the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.